

Appendix 1c: Other Audits and Grant Claims

Troubled Families Programme, Payments by Results Scheme Grant

Objective

To assess compliance with the terms and conditions of the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Financial Framework for making Payment by Result (PBR) claims under the Expanded Troubled Families Programme (Phase 2).

Background

The Financial Framework requires that Internal Audit verifies a 10% representative sample of PBR claims before they are made to ensure there is supporting evidence to confirm families:

- met the required criteria to be considered for entry to the expanded Troubled Families Programme
- have achieved either continuous employment or significant and sustained progress as defined by the Council's agreed Outcomes Plan.

Larger sample sizes may be required for smaller claims in order to ensure the audit is meaningful.

Opinion: March 2017, unqualified claim issued

This was the fifth PBR claim made under the DCLG's new expanded programme.

Of the 114 PBR claims due to be made:

- 34 related to families supported by the Early Help and Family Support team (EHFST) and were assessed as meeting the requirements of the Council's Troubled Families Outcome Plan
- 80 were families supported by social workers where a statutory assessment identified a Child in Need (CIN). Subsequent analysis of these cases by the EHFST has identified outcomes that have potentially also met the Council's Troubled Families Outcome Plan. This was the first time these cases had been considered for PBR claims.

Nine claims resulting from the work of the EHFST were independently reviewed by the Group Manager which was in line with previous protocols agreed under Phase 1 of the programme. Four cases were randomly selected for audit.

Sufficient evidence was available to confirm:

- families met the eligibility criteria for entry to the expanded programme for all the randomly selected files reviewed
- the validity of PBR claims for continuous employment or significant and sustained progress, as defined by the Council's agreed Outcome Plan.

Of the 80 claims resulting from families supported as a result of CIN statutory assessments, nine were initially randomly selected for audit. Sufficient evidence was available to confirm:

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- eight of the nine cases met the eligibility criteria for entry to the expanded programme. One claim was withdrawn as the same evidence was used to support two different entry criteria. As such, the claim did not meet the minimum two entry criteria required by the Troubled Families programme
- the validity of PBR claims for significant and sustained progress for the remaining eight families. These included five claims which Internal Audit agreed were exceptional cases under the DCLG's Financial Framework. For these cases, not all outcomes could be confirmed as met from the original issues identified. However, work undertaken had for instance, led to improved safety and security of these families who had experienced domestic violence.

In light of the issue with eligibility criteria for entry to the programme identified above, a further random sample of five cases were examined, and as a result of this:

- two cases were withdrawn as the minimum two entry criteria was not met
- the remaining three were identified as meeting the entry criteria and PBR requirements either in the Council's Outcome Plan or the DCLG's Financial Framework.

Due to the findings outlined above, agreement was reached for the Group Manager to adopt the same independent management review of a random sample of CIN cases and so, a further 19 cases were examined. Internal Audit confirmed a sample of these cases were valid PBR claims.

Overall, this PBR claim was more complex to audit than previous claims with the issues identified from the addition of the CIN cases. However, the extended testing of cases beyond the minimum 10% and the independent management review arrangements introduced provided sufficient assurance over the validity of the overall PBR claim made.